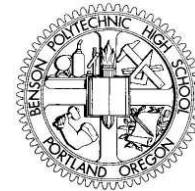


BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT



The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association
April 2011—Tech Show Edition

How PPS's Recent High School Reform Has Affected Benson

Following an innovative and stepped-up effort by the Benson teachers and staff the number of freshmen applicants to attend Benson this fall exceeded the number of openings. Over 360 eighth and ninth -graders applied for the limited 240 freshmen and 10 sophomore openings. The limit of 250 new students and total enrollment of about 850 was mandated by the Portland Public School Board in September 2010 decisions regarding PPS's High School Redesign Project.

The increased Benson efforts resulted in the number of applicants exceeding the number of openings for the first time in several years. The "lucky" 250 future students were selected from 290 applicants that indicated Benson as their first choice in a District operated lottery in early April. Final enrollment "paperwork" for each student is now proceeding.

The 240 entering freshmen and 10 new sophomores will result in a Benson student body of about 870 for the coming year. This number is considerably less than the 1400+ in 2005. With "belt-tightening" and creative budgeting and staffing, Benson will continue to offer three technical pathways; Industrial Engineering, Communications, and Health Occupations. Benson will still field a team in most sports and have many extra-curricular activities even though these things had been in doubt a year ago.

Having a "full" entering class of 240 freshmen is critical to Benson's future. It will help to stabilize the enrollment at the School Board's targeted 850 students. A stable enrollment is very important since Benson's operating budget and allocation of teachers and staff, and, hence its technical study options, is determined primarily by its total enrollment.

Benson's teachers and staff and current students deserve much credit for the increased number of applicants. Beginning in December 2010 they significantly revamped the previous efforts to reach out and explain Benson's unique career technical education (CTE) program to Portland's eighth-graders. A *Benson designed* fact sheet was mailed by the District to the parents of all of the eighth-graders highlighting Benson's programs, how to get more information, and the application process. One or more Benson teachers, counselors, and students visited every eighth grade class in the District to meet face-to-face with students in advance of the February 1st to 28th application window.

On February 9th interested students and their parents were invited to 8th-Grade (Magnet) Night or "mini Tech Show" at Benson. Following a short overview of Benson's 4-year program of integrated academic and technical courses, visitors walked through the shops to see Benson students in action and talk to the teachers. This was followed up by two opportunities (February 15th and 19th) for interested eighth-graders to visit Benson during a regular school day and allowing them to experience what life at Benson is really like for students. On February 24th, a few days before the application deadline, Benson teachers and staff held a parent question and answer night.

For those unfamiliar with the District's current Enrollment and Transfer procedures for entering high school... During February students wishing to attend any of the District's high schools must fill out a "School Choice Application" to indicate their first, second, and third choice of schools. For students selecting Benson, they also have to fill out an additional Benson designed form about their background and interest in a Benson education. Most of the comprehensive high schools had very limited openings for students outside of their neighborhood boundaries while Benson, as one of the focus option high schools, had a large number of freshman openings for any 8th and 9th grader in the city. For all of the schools, including Benson, when the number of applicants exceeds the openings, students are selected through a District run lottery.

With an enrollment of about 870 students Benson will have fewer teachers and a smaller operating budget for the 2011-12 school year compared to the current school year which was funded for slightly more than 1000 students. In addition, the recent budget problems at the District and State level will require additional cuts in all of PPS's schools. The full extent of these cuts is not known at this time and it may be late in the summer before the staffing level at Benson is fully determined.

[For the record, in September the School Board called for a Blue Ribbon Task Force to study Career Technical Education needs in all District high schools; however, this has been of minimal significance in Benson's subsequent direction. The Task Force that met three times late in 2010 which was made up mostly of high level business leaders. Its report, expected in December 2010, has yet to be released. Unofficially, the Task Force did not identify specific hard technical study areas but focused on the lack of basic workplace readiness.]

House For Sale in Fall 2011

The latest home built by the Benson Building Construction Major will be ready for occupancy this fall. Located near the corner of NE Mallory and Skidmore, this single story home offers over 1550 square feet of living space and an abundance of amenities that include:

- 3-bedrooms, 2-baths and 1-car garage
- Greatroom and Large Utility Room
- Hardwood Floors and Skylights
- 250 Square Feet of Attic Storage
- Covered Front and Back Porches
- On-Demand Hot Water System

The home was designed in 2008 in conjunction between Energy Star, the Building Construction teachers, Tony Franciscone and Rich Weber ('75) and several Benson alumni that included Copeland Downs ('08), Amber Wilhite ('08), and Justin Steckler ('08) along with former Benson Architecture Teacher Tammy Hite ('91). The custom cabinets throughout the home were designed by Nancy Duong (2000) and were on display during this year's Tech Show. This combined effort has made this home the most energy efficient constructed by the school to-date.

This home also marks the re-introduction of using students majoring in Electrical who were supervised by a licensed electrical contractor to assist with the wiring.

The sale price for this one of a kind home has yet to be determined, but with its close proximity to schools, Downtown and Lloyd Center, it is likely to sell quickly.

Designs for the next Benson House will begin in May for a lot located adjacent to the current home.



New Alumni Board of Directors Needed

The Alumni Association will be electing new members for its Board of Directors at its annual meeting held in conjunction with the August (date) annual picnic. The new members serve 3 year terms.

Association members may "nominate" themselves or be nominated" (with their consent) by another member at the Picnic or in advance to the Association's Secretary by email or regular mail.

The 15 member Board of Directors are responsible for the on-going business of the Association including the annual Picnic, an alumni room at Tech Show, a Scholarship program for graduates, other activities supporting Benson, a website, and long term

development planning for a greater Benson. The Board typically meets four to nine times per year for 2 hour meetings that are usually held at Benson HS. The Board members also participate in one or more of the Board's committees and their activities. Typically the foregoing will require 3-10 hours of time for most Directors in an average month.

Pursuant to the Association's By-Laws, to vote and/or to be elected a Director one must be a (paid) member of the Association. Former Benson graduates and students, current and former Benson teacher and Benson supporters can join on-line at the Association's website or even at the Picnic.

Getting the Band Back Together

The Alumni Association is exploring interest in the formation of a Benson "Spirit Band" to support the school during athletic and school events. The BPHSAA will sponsor the informal musical group assisting with its initial formation and perhaps provide identifying tee-shirts. It is envisioned that the group might have a limited selection of songs to play at Alumni events, Tech Show and/or the football homecoming game and other significant event such as state playoffs. Since Benson no longer has a music program or a band there would be real value in having a "Spirit Band" at some of its athletic events.

If you have any interest please email the Association at info@BensonTechAlumni.org. After we have a few names a mutually convenient organizational meeting will be set. Once it is formed the "band" might determine its own activities and direction.

Great Year for Boys Basketball

Benson's alumni, including its former basketball players, salutes Benson's 2010-11 Basketball team's great season and winning 2nd place in the Class 5 State Tournament.

This was the closet the team has come to a state title in boys basketball since 1990. The team lost by only 6 points to Corvallis in two overtimes and finished the season with 23 wins and 4 loses.

Coach Troy Berry is a Benson alumni ('81) and was on the team that won the state title in 1981.

Benson Students Win Big at SkillsUSA Oregon Championships

Students from Benson again took top honors at the annual SkillsUSA Oregon Championships held on April 8th & 9th in Milwaukie, Oregon. 28 Benson students won awards in 14 events, including 10 gold medals which qualifies them to compete at the National Championships in Kansas City this June.

In order to cover the costs of travel, hotel rooms and food, the Benson chapter relies on donations from private parties and local companies. If you would like to make a donation, contact Mary Ganoe or Bill Cooper (Class of '72) at Benson High School.

A complete list of winners can be found at the BPHSAA website.



BPHS Centennial, Sooner Than You Think

The official centennial birthday of Benson Polytechnic is something of a debate.

Started in 1908, the Portland Trades School was located in Northwest Portland. The name was changed to Benson Polytechnic in 1915 after Simon Benson donated \$100,000 for a new building to be constructed on Northeast 12th Avenue. If you look at the corner stone located on the northwest corner of the Main Hall, the date is 1916. "F" and "C" wings were also constructed at that time.

So the question becomes, which year should we celebrate the Benson Polytechnic Centennial? Depending on who you ask, the school is already over 100-years old. Of course, many alumni are not willing to let such a momentous occasion just slip by unnoticed.

Soon, the Alumni Association will begin making plans to celebrate a century of Benson history and legacy including a Benson Centennial Yearbook. If you would like to be a part of this landmark event, please contact the BPHSAA.

Oregon Gold Medal Winning Events:

- Radio/Audio Production
- Related Technical Math
- Residential Wiring
- Computer Maintenance Technology
- Promotional Bulletin Board
- Quiz Bowl



2011 Benson Community Picnic & Cruise In

Where: Blue Lake Regional Park, Area 18

When: Sunday, August 14th
11:00 am to 4:00pm

- ◆ Park fee is \$5.00 per vehicle.
- ◆ Bring your own food and beverages, however alcohol is not allowed at this event.

Annual Benson Community Picnic & Cruise In

The 2011 Benson Community Picnic will be held on Sunday, August 14th from 11AM to 4PM at Blue Lake Regional Park. Formerly the Benson All-Class Alumni Picnic, the event is now open to anyone who has attended, taught, or supported Benson over the decades.

In conjunction with the picnic, the alumni association is hosting a car show. If you would like to participate in the show, please contact the alumni association.

Again, we encourage people to participate in the Potluck Table. All you need to do is bring an appetizer, salad, main dish or dessert for up to 4 people. You are still responsible for your own beverages and alcohol is not permitted at our park site.

The cost is \$5 for admittance into the park.

Volunteers to assist with the picnic planning, activities, set-up and clean-up are always needed. If you are interested in helping out and I hope you are, please contact Tammy Hite at info@bensontechalumni.org.

Contacting the BPHSAA

BPHSAA c/o Benson High School
546 NE 12th Ave. Portland, OR 97232

Website: www.BensonTechAlumni.org
Email: Info@BensonTechAlumni.org

Interested in Playing The Benson Fight Song Again?

The Alumni Association is exploring interest in the formation of a Benson "Spirit Band" to support the school during athletic and school events. The BPHSAA will sponsor the informal musical group assisting with its initial formation and perhaps provide identifying tee-shirts. It is envisioned that the group might have a limited selection of songs to play at Alumni events, Tech Show and/or the football homecoming game and other significant event such as state playoffs. Since Benson no longer has a music program or a band there would be real value in having a "Spirit Band" at some of its athletic events.

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1983-84 School Band

Alumni Calendar of Events

June 18.....Class of 1961 Reunion
July 29..... Class of 1981 Reunion
Aug 14.....Benson Community Picnic
08/13 & 08/14.....Class of 1991 Reunion
October 2011.....Homecoming

Every 4th Tuesday of the month...Kenton Station
Social Gathering